

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ARA-06 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 FEA-01
ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00
EB-07 FPC-01 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-06 OES-06 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04
TRSE-00 ACDA-07 PA-01 PRS-01 IO-13 /146 W
----- 093254 /63

R 221408Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1047
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY GUAYAQUIL
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 8730

PARIS FOR USMISSION OECD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ENRG, EFIN, SY
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SUBJECT: SYRIAN BACKING FOR SAUDI PRICING DECISION

1. IN QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD WITH PRESS DEC. 21 FOLLOWING
HIS READING OF STATEMENT CONCERNING SYRIAN-CAIRO UNITY TALKS,
FONMIN KHADDAM WAS ASKED WHETHER RECENT OPEC INCREASES WILL
AFFECT WORLD PUBLIC OPINION VIS-A-VIS ARAB ISSUES. STATED

THAT ANNOUNCED PRICE INCREASES WOULD REQUIRE DEBATE SINCE "THE EMPLOYMENT OF OIL HAS NOW APPARENTLY STARTED TURNING AGAINST THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE." HE POINTED OUT THAT THESE INCREASES WILL HURT THE THIRD WORLD WHICH IS ALREADY SUFFERING FROM THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS AND WORLD INFLATION AND ARABS WILL BE BLAMED.

2. PETROLEUM MINISTER DARWISH TOLD AMBASSADOR EARLIER SAME DAY THAT SYRIA INTENDS TO PRICE ITS OWN OIL ACCORDING TO SAUDI-UAE FORMULA RATHER THAN THAT OF OPEC MAJORITY. DARWISH ALSO REFERRED TO SARG'S DESIRE SHOW ITS SYMPATHY WITH THIRD WORLD STATES WITHOUT OIL.

3. COMMENT: THESE TWO STATEMENTS, TAKEN TOGETHER, SUGGEST SYRIA IS SUPPORTING SAUDI POSITION RE PRICE INCREASES. IT WAS NOT CLEAR, HOWEVER, WHETHER DARWISH'S STATEMENT TO AMBASSADOR REPRESENTED FINAL SARG DECISION OR HIS OWN PREDICTION.
MURPHY

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